AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A ~~filled and wound~~ muffler insert for use in a muffler comprising:

a ~~filled insert comprising at least one pipe and a~~ body of wool-type fibrous material conforming to the shape of a compartment in a tool ~~product, said wool-type product surrounding a portion of said at least one pipe~~; and

a yarn ~~thread wrapped~~ wound around the body, thereby confining the volume of the body. ~~and secured to an outer portion of said wool-type product.~~

2. (Currently Amended) The ~~filled and wound~~ muffler insert of claim 1, wherein ~~at least one of said at least one pipe(s) comprises~~ the muffler insert includes a perforated pipe.

3. (Currently Amended) The ~~filled and wound~~ muffler insert of claim [1] 2, wherein ~~said filled~~ the insert further ~~comprises~~ includes at least one partition(s) coupled to ~~said at least one~~ the pipe.

4. (Currently Amended) The ~~filled and wound~~ muffler insert of claim 3, wherein at least one of ~~said~~ the ~~at least one partitions~~ partition(s) comprises a perforated partition.

5. (Currently Amended) The ~~filled and wound~~ muffler insert of claim 1, wherein ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread~~ comprises a polymer yarn ~~thread~~ having a tensile strength at room temperature of at least 550 megapascals and having a tensile strength at temperatures greater than about 80 degrees Celsius of at most 50 megapascals.

6. (Currently Amended) The ~~filled and wound~~ muffler insert of claim 5, wherein ~~said~~ the polymer yarn ~~thread~~ is selected from the group consisting of polypropylene yarn ~~thread~~ and modified polyethylene yarn.

7. (Currently Amended) The ~~filled and wound~~ muffler insert of claim 5, wherein ~~said~~ the polymer yarn ~~thread~~ has a fiber diameter of between approximately 0.2 and 1.0 millimeters.

8. (Currently Amended) The ~~filled and wound~~ muffler insert of claim 1, wherein ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread~~ comprises a steel yarn thread.

9. (Currently Amended) The ~~filled and wound~~ muffler insert of claim 1, wherein ~~said~~ the wool-type product comprises one or more strands of a continuous strand material.

10. (Currently Amended) The ~~filled and wound~~ muffler insert of claim 9, wherein ~~said~~ the continuous strand material comprises one or more strands each comprising a plurality of glass filaments selected from the group consisting of E-glass filaments and S-glass filaments.

11. (Currently Amended) ~~A filled and wound~~ The muffler insert of claim 1 wherein the muffler insert includes a core material, and wherein the body of wool-type fibrous material surrounds at least a portion of the core material.~~comprising:~~

~~a filled insert comprising a core material and a wool-type product, said wool-type product surrounding a portion of said core material; and~~

~~a yarn thread wrapped around an outer portion of said wool-type product.~~

Claims 12 - 15 (Cancelled)

16. (Currently Amended) A method for forming a ~~filled and wound~~ muffler insert comprising:

providing ~~an unfilled muffler insert~~ a tool having one or more compartments;

~~coupling said unfilled muffler insert within a shaped tool, said shaped tool having an upper section and a lower section, said shaped tool and said unfilled muffler insert defining at least one compartment there between;~~

introducing a fibrous material within ~~one of said~~ at least one of the compartments ~~compartment~~ to form a ~~filled insert~~ wool-type fibrous body;

placing ~~said filled insert~~ the tool onto a winding machine~~, said winding tool defining a center axis~~;

~~moving said upper section of said shaped tool away from said lower section along said center axis to create a gap;~~

wrapping a yarn ~~thread~~ around at least a portion of the body to form the muffler insert ~~said filled insert exposed within said gap to form the filled and wound muffler insert~~;

removing ~~said shaped~~ the tool ~~and the filled and wound muffler insert~~ from ~~said winding tool~~ the winding machine; and

extracting the ~~filled and wound~~ muffler insert from ~~said~~ the ~~shaped~~ tool.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, wherein introducing a fibrous material comprises:

introducing a nozzle of a texturizing device within a fill opening of ~~said~~ the ~~shaped~~ tool; and

introducing one or more strands of a continuous strand material from ~~said~~ the texturizing device through ~~said~~ the nozzle and into ~~said~~ the compartment under vacuum pressure.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, wherein wrapping a yarn ~~thread~~ comprises:

coupling ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread~~ contained on ~~said~~ the winding machine to a gripper ~~located at a position near said gap~~;

rotating a portion of ~~said~~ the winding machine around ~~said~~ the tool ~~filled insert~~ such that ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread~~ is wound onto ~~said~~ the body of fibrous material to form the muffler insert ~~filled insert~~; and

cutting ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread~~ between ~~said~~ the muffler ~~filled~~ insert and ~~said~~ the winding machine.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 18 further comprising affixing ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread around said~~ to the muffler ~~filled~~ insert.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 19, wherein affixing ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread around said filled~~ to the muffler insert comprises affixing ~~said~~ the end of the yarn to ~~said~~ another portion of ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread~~.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein affixing ~~said~~ the end comprises ultrasonically welding ~~said~~ the end to ~~said~~ another portion of ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread~~.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein affixing ~~said~~ the end comprises hot welding ~~said~~ the end to ~~said~~ another portion of ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread~~.

23. The method of claim 20, wherein affixing ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread around said filled~~ to the muffler insert comprises knotting ~~said~~ the end of ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread~~ to ~~said~~ another portion of ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread~~.

24. The method of claim 19, wherein affixing ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread around said filled~~ to the muffler insert comprises affixing ~~said~~ the end within ~~said fibrous portion~~ the body of fibrous material.

25. (Currently Amended) A method for forming ~~an odd-shaped~~ a muffler comprising:

providing an unfilled muffler insert;

coupling a ~~shaped~~ tool around a portion of ~~said~~ the ~~unfilled~~ insert, ~~said~~ the ~~shaped~~ tool having an upper section and a lower section, ~~said~~ the ~~shaped~~ tool and ~~said~~ the ~~unfilled~~ insert defining ~~a~~ at least one compartment there between;

~~forming a filled insert~~ filling the at least one compartment ~~within said shaped tool~~ with a fibrous material such that the material forms a wool-type body within the compartment of the tool;

placing ~~said filled insert~~ the tool onto a winding machine;

moving ~~said~~ the upper section of ~~said~~ the ~~shaped~~ tool away from ~~said~~ the lower section to create a gap;

wrapping and securing a yarn ~~thread~~ around a portion of ~~said filled insert~~ the body of fibrous material exposed within ~~said~~ the gap to form a filled and wound muffler insert;

removing ~~said~~ the ~~shaped~~ tool and ~~said filled and wound~~ the muffler insert from ~~said~~ the winding tool;

extracting ~~said filled and wound~~ the muffler insert from ~~said~~ the ~~shaped~~ tool; and

coupling ~~said filled and wound~~ the muffler insert within a muffler shell.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 25, wherein forming ~~a filled insert~~ the wool-type body comprises:

introducing a nozzle of a texturizing device within a fill opening of ~~said~~ the ~~shaped~~ tool;

introducing one or more strands of a continuous strand material from ~~said~~ the texturizing device through ~~said~~ the nozzle and into ~~said~~ the compartment under vacuum pressure.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 25, wherein wrapping and securing a yarn ~~thread~~ comprises:

coupling ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread~~ contained on ~~said~~ the winding machine to ~~said filled insert~~ the body within ~~said~~ the gap;

rotating a portion of ~~said~~ the winding machine around ~~said filled insert~~ the body such that ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread~~ is wound onto ~~said filled insert~~ the body; and

cutting ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread~~ between ~~said filled insert~~ the body and ~~said~~ the winding machine; and

securing ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread~~ around ~~said filled insert~~ the body.

28. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 27, wherein securing ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread around said filled insert~~ to the body comprises affixing ~~said~~ the end of the yarn to ~~said~~ another portion of ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread~~.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein affixing ~~said~~ the end comprises ultrasonically welding ~~said~~ the end to ~~said~~ another portion of ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread~~.

30. The method of claim 28, wherein affixing ~~said~~ the end comprises hot welding ~~said~~ the end to ~~said~~ another portion of ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread~~.

31. The method of claim 27, wherein securing ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread~~ around ~~said~~ the filled insert comprises knotting ~~said~~ the end to ~~said~~ another portion of ~~said~~ the yarn ~~thread~~.

32. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 25, wherein coupling ~~said filled and wound~~ the muffler insert within a muffler shell comprises:

providing a muffler shell having a pair of open ends and an interior region;

providing a pair of end pieces;

pressing ~~said filled and wound~~ the muffler insert through ~~said~~ the open end and within ~~said~~ the interior region;

coupling one of ~~said~~ the pair of end pieces to one of ~~said~~ the pair of open ends;

coupling the other of ~~said~~ the pair of end pieces to the other of ~~said~~ the pair of open ends;

sealingly affixing ~~said~~ the one of ~~said~~ the pair of end pieces to ~~said~~ the one of ~~said~~ the pair of open ends; and

sealingly affixing ~~said~~ the other of ~~said~~ the pair of end pieces to ~~said~~ the other of ~~said~~ the pair of open ends.

33. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 25, wherein coupling ~~said filled and wound~~ the muffler insert within a muffler shell comprises:

providing a muffler shell having an interior region and a first end and second end; and

coupling ~~said~~ the muffler shell around ~~said filled and wound~~ the muffler insert such that ~~said filled and wound~~ the muffler insert is substantially contained within ~~said~~ the interior region and such that ~~said~~ the first end substantially abuts ~~said~~ the second end; and

sealingly affixing ~~said~~ the first end to ~~said~~ the second end.

34. (Cancelled)

35. (New) The method of claim 16 wherein at least one of the one or more compartments includes a perforated pipe.

36. (New) The method of claim 25 wherein the muffler insert includes a perforated pipe.